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DATE: March 18, 2009

TO: Registration Unit - DOJ

FROM: J. Michael Slocum

RE: KLG Press Release

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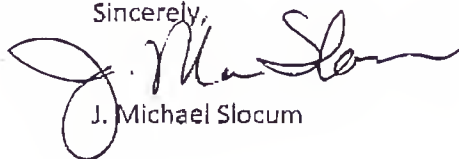
March 18, 2009
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Registration Unit
Counterespionage Section
National Security Division
US Department of Justice
1400 New York Avenue, N.W.
1st Floor - Public Office
Suite 100
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Sir or Madam:

Enclosed please find a Press Release dated Monday, March 18, 2009 from the Kurdistan Regional Government US liaison office, Registrant #5783.

Sincerely,



J. Michael Slocum

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FIRST UNITED NATIONS COMMEMORATION OF HALABJA GENOCIDE

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Diplomats, victims and human rights advocates urge annual recognition and increased activism as steps to deter future slaughters

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NEW YORK — The enduring tragedies of the 1988 chemical weapons attack against the Kurdish city of Halabja were commemorated for the first time at the United Nations on Monday. The commemoration, co-hosted by the Iraqi Mission to the United Nations and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), saw Ambassadors, members of the Iraqi parliament, the human rights community and massacre survivors, decay the world's silence at the time and urged steps to ensure no similar genocide again occurs.

Contacts

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Iraq's Ambassador to the United Nations, H.E. Dr. Hemid Al-Bayati, said holding the commemoration at the U.N. on the 21st anniversary of the genocide was an important milestone for the world to acknowledge the terror inflicted and the lack of action to protect the innocent and bring to justice those responsible.

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"We come into the United Nations after we have told our story in the streets of New York, Washington and London," Al-Bayati said. "This is history." The Ambassador called on the United Nations to set March 16 as an annual commemoration "with the hope that atrocities like this will not occur again"

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At least 5,000 people died as an immediate result of the chemical attack on March 16, 1988, and again on March 18. A further 7,000 people were injured or suffered long term illness and birth defects after being exposed to the nerve agents Tabun, Sarin, and VX, as well as mustard gas. While the attack against Halabja remains the largest-scale, single chemical weapons assault directed against a civilian-populated area in history, the attacks were part of a larger systematic operation named Anfal which was aimed at eradicating the Kurds.

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"Halabja, once a vibrant center of Kurdish culture was, in a day, turned into a symbol of Kurdish tragedy," Qusbi Talebani, the KRG's representative to the U.S. said, "It is our ground zero."

Discussing steps world leaders must take to prevent future genocide were Ambassador Peter Galbraith and Liebe Geft, director of the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. Galbraith recalled his discovery of Saddam's campaign of atrocities in 1987 and how world governments and officials must not dilute the horror for the sake of short-term expediences with a rogue nation. Geft said the commemoration "embodies our hopes and our dreams for a more tolerant future." Reading statements of solidarity were representatives of the Turkish and Iranian missions to the U.N.

During the commemoration Human Rights Watch was recognized by the KRG for its work to expose and document the genocide of the Kurds by Saddam Hussein. Kenneth Roth, executive director, said the world must never again accept geopolitical excuses as the reasons for inaction against genocide such as that against the Kurds. "It is wrong to close one's eyes to atrocities," Roth said. "Once a measure of impunity is set, all kinds of dictators around the world are all too eager to listen and to act."

A photography exhibit documenting the Halabja genocide was unveiled and will remain on display in the United Nations before traveling to various locations across the United States. The exhibit will then become part of the permanent work at The Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.

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for more information contact the KRG Representation to the US: +1.202.637.4439

The Kurdistan Regional Government Liaison Office - U.S.A. is registered as an agent of the Kurdistan Regional Government under 22 U.S.C. 9511 et seq.

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